

K20
Press kit
October 15, 2021
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Press kit: Lynette Yiadom-Boakye

Lynette Yiadom-Boakye. Fly in League with the Night
October 16, 2021 – February 13, 2022
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Press conference and preview
Friday, October 15, 2021, 12pm, K20

Speakers

- Susanne Gaensheimer, Director Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen
- Andrea Schlieker, curator, Tate Britain
- Maria Müller-Schareck, curator, Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen

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Download press information and images:

Installation views:
<https://www.kunstsammlung.de/en/press/>

#K20YiadomBoakye
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Lynette Yiadom-Boakye: The Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen Presents the First Comprehensive Exhibition of the Painter in Germany

Beginning in October, K20 – Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen will present *Lynette Yiadom-Boakye. Fly in League with the Night*, the first comprehensive exhibition of the painter's work in Germany. This show exemplifies the power that painting can still have today.

Lynette Yiadom-Boakye (b. 1977 in London) is a painter. She paints fictional women and men in enigmatic, mostly undetermined spatial situations. Time seems to be suspended: People rest, walk, gaze, dance, talk, laugh, and converse—just as people do, and always have done. They live in private worlds; nothing is revealed about their status or role in the community. Even when they smile or gaze in our direction, they are primarily concerned with their own affairs. They look through binoculars at things we cannot see; they dream, reflect thoughts, or have conversations. Men communicate with men, occasionally with birds and other animals, women with women, but never a man with a woman. The mood is created by the careful observation of facial expressions, gestures, and colors. Rarely does the painter allude to the style, fashion, or culture of a particular time. Thus, in a sense, the figures are timeless and placeless.

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The versatile artist describes her compositions as “composites, ciphers, riddles”—“Of the world, but only partially concerned with it. Concerned with the part that gives them life, less troubled by the rest.” Each painted scene thus seems like an autonomous story that could have another chapter. Lynette Yiadom-Boakye describes the evocative titles of her paintings as an “additional brushstroke.” They are part of the work, offering clues to possible narratives, but they neither describe nor explain.

For Yiadom-Boakye, painting itself is a language, a powerful means to communicate beyond words. She begins with a color, a composition, a gesture, or a particular direction of light. Found images, memories, literature, and the history of painting serve as sources for her work. “All of that is then composed on the canvas. [This lets me] really think through the painting, to allow these to be paintings in the most physical sense, and build a language that didn't feel as if I was trying to take something out of life and translate it into painting, but that actually allowed the paint to do the talking,” the artist describes her working method.

Each painting is a composite of various movements and poses elaborated on the surface of the canvas. The history of painting is important to Yiadom-Boakye, whose own contribution asserts that the medium has the potential to create meaning even today.

Parallel to her work as a painter, Lynette Yiadom-Boakye also writes prose, dialogues, and poems, which she publishes in her exhibition catalogs, for example. For her, writing and painting are separate activities. However, as different forms of creativity, they are intertwined, and each is infused with ideas of fiction, invention, rhythm, and infinite possibilities. "I write about the things I can't paint and paint the things I can't write about," she explains.

The depth of her engagement with art and literary history echoes in the paintings, but at the same time they tell their own, new story. Unsurprisingly, the painter has a highly varied library at her disposal. A selection of the novels, essays, and dramas she cherishes has been put aside for her exhibition (see the enclosed list and booklet accompanying the exhibition). Jazz has also had an influence on her work. In a playlist accessible via Spotify, she has compiled pieces by musicians such as Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Nina Simone, and Bill Evans: <https://spoti.fi/2ZKz6Vv>.

In-House Curator: Maria Müller-Schareck

After solo exhibitions at the Studio Museum in New York (2010), the Haus der Kunst in Munich and the Serpentine Gallery in London (2015), and the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York (2017), *Fly in League with the Night* is the first comprehensive exhibition that honors Yiadom-Boakye's work in depth. Curated by Andrea Schlieker, Isabella Maidment, and Aïcha Mehrez, Tate Britain, in close collaboration with the artist, it spans early works created at the Royal Academy Schools, where she graduated in 2003, to her most recent paintings, completed in 2020 during the coronavirus pandemic. The artist has carefully developed the installations at the Tate Britain, the Moderna Museet, and the Kunstsammlung. Beyond chronology, she aims above all at the dialogues between the images and a rhythm of seeing that unfolds as one walks through the spaces.

The exhibition has been organized by Tate Britain in cooperation with the Moderna Museet, Stockholm, the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf, and the Mudam Luxembourg – Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean.

Publication

The accompanying catalog has been published by Hatje Cantz. In addition to numerous illustrations, it contains texts by the curators Andrea Schlieker and Isabella Maidment, Tate Britain, the American poet and essayist Elizabeth Alexander, and Lynette Yiadom-Boakye.

Partners and Sponsors

The exhibition is supported by
Schwarzkopf

Media Partner of the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen:
Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung

Supported by the Ministry of Culture and Science of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia

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Books recommended by the Artist

Percival Everett: **Erasure**, 2001

Zora Neale Hurston: **Their Eyes Were Watching God**, 1937

Oscar Wilde: **Salomé**, 1893

Oscar Wilde: **The Picture Of Dorian Gray**, 1891

James Baldwin: **Giovanni's Room**, 1956

James Baldwin: **Just Above My Head**, 1979

James Baldwin: **The Fire Next Time**, 1963

James Baldwin: A Dialogue (With Nikki Giovanni)

Flannery O Connor: **A Good Man Is Hard To Find**, 1953

Flannery O Connor: **Wise Blood**, 1952

Hilton Als: **White Girls**, 2013

Glenn Ligon: **Yourself In The World**, 2011

Toni Morrison: **Beloved**, 1987

Marlon James: **John Crow's Devil**, 2005

Marlon James: **A Brief History of Seven Killings**, 2014

Marlon James: **The Book of Night Women**, 2009

Ted Hughes: **Crow**, 1970

William Shakespeare: **Hamlet**, 1609

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Opening day
Saturday, October 16, 2021 from 11am – 8pm
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Free entry

Art Guides
11am – 4pm, 6pm – 8pm

Workshop for children
11.30am
Registration required

Curator's tour
3pm
Dr. Maria Müller-Schareck, curator of the exhibition
Registration required

Art Talk for young adults
5pm
Registration required

Supporting program to the exhibition

Art Guides
Saturdays, Sundays, Holidays: 4pm – 5pm
Every first Wednesday of the month: 6pm – 10pm

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Events
For more events and the workshop programme please check the calendar on our website: www.kunstsammlung.de/en/calendar/

Information: Your visit to the museum (1.10.2021):

To visit the exhibitions and collection rooms, no registration, no booking of a time slot and no proof of vaccination, recovery or a current-day negative test is required. Compliance with the applicable distance regulations and the wearing of a mask (OP mask, FFP2/3, KN95) are mandatory for the duration of the stay in the museum.

Prior registration at service@kunstsammlung.de is required for participation in workshops, guided tours and events. Presentation of a proof of vaccination, recovery or a current-day negative test result is mandatory at the Museum Box Office prior to attending the workshop, tour or event. Students are required to self-test during the vacations. Children up to school age are not required to wear mouth and nose protection.

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**Exhibition preview
Open Space
Nothing but the Future
Nov 13, 2021 – Feb 13, 2022
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For the second OPEN SPACE, the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen will again transform an exhibition hall into an indoor public space. Under the title “Nothing but the Future,” the focus is now on the Anthropocene, a scientific term for the present age of the earth, in which humankind has become a force of nature.

In view of the climate crisis and its life threatening consequences, the excessive waste of resources, and growing social and economic inequality, the question must be asked: How can we think and shape a just and worthwhile future together? In a cooperative process with local and international partners, a transdisciplinary program is being developed that will make OPEN SPACE a place for negotiations on questions concerning the present and future of our planet.

Developed in collaboration with the architectural office of raumlaborberlin, OPEN SPACE is a place where people can meet without having to pay admission and where they can work, discuss, learn, play, read, or participate in a wide variety of events.

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The Open Space is supported by Commerzbank-Stiftung.

Media partner: Kunstforum International

Press conference: November 11, 2021, 11am, K20

Opening weekend: November 13 and 14, 2021, 11am – 6pm, K20