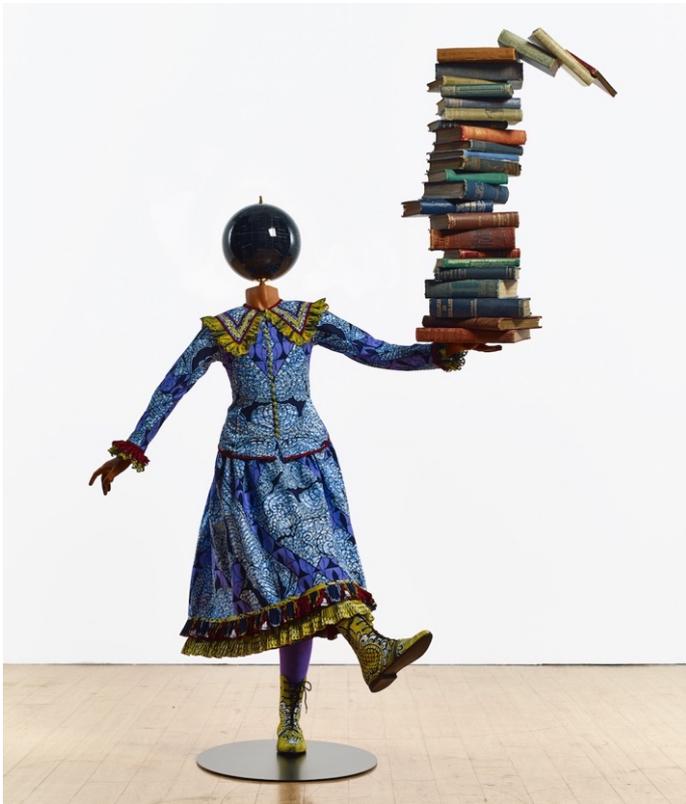


PearlLam Galleries

Singapore

Childhood Memories:

YINKA SHONIBARE MBE solo exhibition



Yinka Shonibare MBE b. 1962, *Girl Balancing Knowledge* (2015) Fibreglass mannequin, Dutch wax printed cotton textile, books, globe, leather and steel baseplate 179 x 139 x 89 cm (70 1/2 x 54 3/4 x 35 in.) Photographer: Stephen White

Exhibition Dates 21 January–13 March, 2016 Tuesday–Saturday, 11am–7pm; Sunday, 12–6pm
Venue Pearl Lam Galleries, 5 Lock Road, #01-06, Gillman Barracks, Singapore 108933
Screening room Pearl Lam Galleries, 9 Lock Road, #03-22, Gillman Barracks, Singapore 108937

Singapore—Pearl Lam Galleries is delighted to present an exhibition of work by British-Nigerian artist Yinka Shonibare MBE, opening on 21 January, 2016. In contrast with the artist's previous work, which addressed universal political concerns, this new series returns to the essence of the imagination, an exploration of the subjective and the subconscious that is inspired by surrealism. For the first time, the artist will utilise his childhood memories in Nigeria, dividing the exhibition into two parts: new surrealist sculptures along with several screen prints.

Shonibare draws on surrealism as both an artistic and political movement aimed at the liberation of the human being from the constraints of capitalism, the state, and the cultural forces that limit the reign of the imagination. The first part of the exhibition comprises two new fantastical sculptures based on the artist's childhood memories when he lived in Lagos, Nigeria. Shonibare was born in Britain, but his family moved to Lagos when he was three years old. These dreamlike sculptures evoke poetic surrealist juxtapositions, exploring the artist's half-remembered childhood tales, as well as the constructed and fictitious memories of childhood, folklore, and tradition.

Included in the show is *Boy Sitting Beside Hibiscus Flower*, a sculpture based on the artist's memory of his childhood garden in Nigeria. In a dreamlike scenario a boy sits under a giant hibiscus flower shaded from the hot sun, while in *Ibeji (Twins) Riding a Butterfly*, the artist explores Nigerian folklore about the significance of twins. Known as 'Ibeji' within Yoruba culture, twins are a source of anxiety and celebration, regarded as divine beings capable of bringing either affluence or misery to their parents.

In the remaining new sculptures in the show, the artist remembers making magical imaginary journeys through books. In *Girl Balancing Knowledge*, a girl precariously balances books on her left hand, likely to collapse in a heap. She kicks her right foot over to her left as if in a silent, surreal dance of joy. Education was highly valued in Shonibare's family, which is why he returned to Britain at 17 years old to sit his A-levels. This work acts as a metaphor that bridges his time in Lagos and London, a move that was driven by his hunger for knowledge.

The artist's trademark material is the brightly coloured African batik fabric he purchases at Brixton market in London, which can be seen throughout the exhibition. The fabric was inspired by Indonesian design, mass-produced by the Dutch, and eventually sold to the colonies in West Africa where it became a new sign of African identity and independence in the 1960s. The fabric makes up the clothes on the figures of Shonibare's new sculptures.

For the first time at Pearl Lam Galleries, this exhibition will spread across two spaces at Gillman Barracks. A new space near block 5 will be home to the artist's new body of work, while Pearl Lam Galleries' original space in block 9 will be transformed into a screening room which will show a documentary about Yinka Shonibare MBE, allowing visitors to find out more about the artist's life and practice.

"I'm delighted to be welcoming Yinka Shonibare MBE to our Singapore gallery for his first exhibition here, following on from the success of his Hong Kong show in 2013. Stimulating an artistic discourse is important to Pearl Lam Galleries, and while Yinka's new body of work draws on surrealism, his work continues to comment on cultural identity, colonialism, and post-colonialism, themes very much relevant to a Singaporean audience."

—Pearl Lam, Founder, Pearl Lam Galleries

About Artist

Yinka Shonibare MBE was born in 1962 in London and moved to Lagos, Nigeria at the age of three. He returned to London to study Fine Art first at Central Saint Martins College and then at Goldsmiths College, where he received his MFA.

Shonibare was a Turner prize nominee in 2004 and was also awarded the decoration of Member of the "Most Excellent Order of the British Empire" or MBE. He was notably commissioned by Okwui Enwezor at Documenta 10 in 2002 to create his most recognised work *Gallantry and Criminal Conversation* that launched him onto an international stage. He has exhibited at the Venice Biennale and internationally at leading museums worldwide. In September 2008, his major mid-career survey commenced at the MCA Sydney and then toured to the Brooklyn Museum, New York and the Museum of African Art at the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

Shonibare's work, Nelson's Ship in a Bottle was the 2010 Fourth Plinth Commission and was displayed in Trafalgar Square, London until January 2012. It was the first commission by a black British artist and was part of a national fundraising campaign organised by the Art Fund and the National Maritime Museum, who have now successfully acquired the sculpture permanently for display outside the museum's entrance in Greenwich Park, London.

In 2012, the Royal Opera House commissioned Globe Head Ballerina to be displayed on the exterior of the Royal Opera House, overlooking Russell Street in Covent Garden. The life-sized ballerina encased within a giant 'snow globe' spins slowly as if caught mid-dance. The piece appears to encapsulate a moment of performance as if stolen from the stage of the Royal Opera House.

Shonibare has also been elected as a Sculptor in the Royal Academy of Arts, making him part of a select society of at most 80 practicing artists working in the UK. This honour, historically a way to distinguish an artist as a professional in Britain, is the art community's recognition of the significance of Shonibare's work.

Shonibare's works are included in prominent collections internationally, including the Tate Collection, London; Victoria and Albert Museum, London; National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institute, Washington, D.C; Museum of Modern Art, New York; National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; and National Gallery of Modern Art in Rome, Rome.

About Pearl Lam Galleries

Founded by Pearl Lam, Pearl Lam Galleries is a driving force within Asia's contemporary art scene. With over 20 years of experience exhibiting Asian and Western art and design, it is one of the leading and most established contemporary art galleries to be launched out of China.

Playing a vital role in stimulating international dialogue on Chinese and Asian contemporary art, the Galleries is dedicated to championing artists who re-evaluate and challenge perceptions of cultural practice from the region. The Galleries in Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Singapore collaborate with renowned curators, each presenting distinct programming from major solo exhibitions, special projects, and installations to conceptually rigorous group shows. Based on the philosophy of Chinese Literati where art forms have no hierarchy, Pearl Lam Galleries is dedicated to breaking down boundaries between different disciplines, with a unique gallery model committed to encouraging cross-cultural exchange.

The 4 branches of Pearl Lam Galleries in Hong Kong, Shanghai and Singapore represent an increasingly influential roster of contemporary artists from Chinese artists Zhu Jinshi and Su Xiaobai, who synthesise Chinese sensibilities with an international visual language, are presented internationally with work now included in major private and public collections worldwide as well as introducing leading international artists such as Jenny Holzer, Leonardo Drew, Carlos Rolón/Dzine and Yinka Shonibare MBE to markets in the region, providing opportunities for new audiences in Asia to encounter their work. Pearl Lam Galleries encourages international artists to create new work which engages specifically with the region, collaborating to produce thought-provoking, culturally relevant work.

Press Enquiries

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