

## Where I Belong: A Solo Exhibition by Deborah Segun

Exhibition dates    3 January– 1 March, 2025 (Viewing by appointment only)  
Please contact [visit@70sqm.com](mailto:visit@70sqm.com) or WeChat: \_70squaremetres  
Venue                70 Square Metres, G/F, 41 Hengshan Road, Shanghai, China

SHANGHAI—70 Square Metres is delighted to present *Where I Belong*, an exhibition by Nigerian contemporary artist Deborah Segun. Her series of works are drawn from focusing on the idea of change and adaptability and share her nostalgic experience of moving back to the United Kingdom, a place the artist once considered to be a home away from home, but which now feels entirely different to her due to change and time. Contrary to her earlier experience, everything is fast-paced nowadays, and time waits for no one. According to Segun, this often means “one does not bask in the moment and enjoy things for what they simply are”. Hounded by an irreconcilable longing for a pleasant past with the daunting reality of the present, she deliberates upon the circumstances that have necessitated the change.

Trying to reconnect to a familiar environment that she once thought of as home demands a conscious focus and meditation for the artist to understand the changes that have rendered her past memory short-lived. *Where I Belong* unveils a body of work illustrative of Segun’s journey of withdrawal to a somewhat monotonous, quiet and calmer lifestyle in contrast to an emergent hustle and bustle. It documents the process of her starting all over and reprogramming herself to be more in tune with her surroundings, which led her to engage with her “inner child” and confront past traumas.

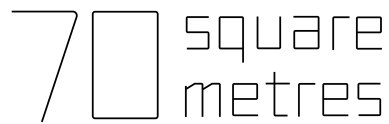
Segun adopts a deconstructive approach to project fragmented female faces and figures as silhouettes in contemplation and repose. Her paintings are rendered in a minimalist delicateness that alternates pale shades of colours outlining her subjects with flatness and calm.

In *A Different Past*, the artist focuses on the wide age gap between her and her siblings, which meant that she often spent a lot of time alone and basically grew up as an only child. Conversely, as she grew older, her desire for community increased, resulting in her building and maintaining a close group of friends and family, integral in reshaping her perspectives and approach to life.

In *Safe Haven*, the subject of community is also highlighted as vital to Segun reinventing herself, healing from past traumas, and deciding the direction of her future. Her interactions with women with similar shared experiences as her could not have been more pivotal in changing certain negative notions she once held about herself, including feeling ashamed of her big body and yielding to body-shaming jibes. This thread of vulnerability from past experiences also runs through *Soaking It All In*, while *Enrichment* and *Spring* bring a sense of relief as they signify a period of renewal, spiritual rebirth and rejuvenation.

In *Silent Comfort*, Segun looks back at her vulnerable past and how self-love has provided a cover for her emotions to commence a healing process towards self-actualisation. *Sitting Still* underlines the artist’s escape to childhood when she would dream of a good future for her adulthood and work un-distractedly with that mindset.

An advocate of self-awareness and well-being, Segun encourages women to strive towards fulfilment, while referencing her personal experience as a perfect model.



## About Deborah Segun

Deborah Segun (b. 1994) is a multidisciplinary artist from Lagos, Nigeria, who is now based in London, UK. Her works can be described as a mix between cubism and abstraction; she takes a playful, purist approach to her work by focusing on form rather than detail through the use of different artistic mediums. The inspiration behind her works stems from her personal and shared experiences as a woman, as well as observations of any given space she occupies at a time. Segun exaggerates the figures or displaces them, as she believes it is her own way of confronting how she sees things.


## About 70 Square Metres


70 Square Metres is a new gallery space in Shanghai by gallerist Pearl Lam that houses artist residency programmes and provides an opportunity for emerging non-residency artists to exhibit their work. Located in the historic former French Concession, the new space represents Lam's ongoing dedication to nurturing creativity and promoting underrepresented voices while fostering cross-cultural dialogue and understanding. The residency programme underscores the gallerist's ongoing commitment to strengthening connections between the East and West, as well as other areas of the world such as Africa. Lam believes that art transcends borders with its power to communicate with people of all cultures and nations.


Pearl Lam, Founder of 70 Square Metres, says, "By welcoming artists from various countries, disciplines, and stages in their careers, we create a vibrant environment where ideas and different perspectives flourish. This initiative not only enriches our community but also contributes to the broader cultural landscape. We provide residents with the time, space, and resources they need to dive deeply into their work, explore new mediums, and create innovative and expressive works."

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