

News Release July 2021

Adébayo Bolaji: In Pursuit of Flow

5 Oct 2021 – 14 Jan 2022



UH Arts is delighted to present a solo exhibition by British-Nigerian artist Adébayo Bolaji. *In Pursuit of Flow* brings together brand new works made specifically for the exhibition during lockdown with works drawn from the past five years of Bolaji's artistic career.

This is the first time the artist has exhibited in a University Gallery. The vast space and scale presented by the Art & Design Gallery provides an expansive playground for Bolaji and an opportunity to see his works in a new context.

Adébayo Bolaji's expressive and dynamic works, which include painting, sculpture, collage and film are rich with references to personal history, as well as cultural notes from his Nigerian heritage and home city, London. He plays intuitively with figuration, abstraction, deconstruction and scale, filling the Gallery with large colourful paintings and playful sculptures made out of found objects that bring to mind mystical creatures. The fluidity of movement and exaggerated forms of Bolaji's works stem organically from his performing arts background.

The concept of flow is an important component in Bolaji's work – encouraging a world of experimentation, imagination and process. He has created brand new works for the exhibition that focus on the sense of flow and the change in an individual's personal journey in life. The works can be seen as autobiographical, reflecting on where we are as a society

right now. Bolaji's "dialogue between the internal and external world" is also evident in the film works and poems displayed in the exhibition.

"Let me be clear, one is not going to find a set of works that are being dictatorial in their message saying 'oh, look, here is an artist talking about flow', rather, it's an organic collection of works and an open conversation to whoever comes into contact with them. I myself, simply want to be in flow."

Curator of the exhibition, Inna Allen, said "In Pursuit of Flow presents bold, confident and vibrant works that are quick to capture the viewer's attention and evoke vivid responses. After a rather paused period in our lives, it feels good to immerse yourself in such striking, animated works – like an explosion of the senses."

In addition to the exhibition, UH Arts is delivering a dynamic programme of live and online events, including a digital version of the exhibition, 'Meet the Artist' film, related talks and a live workshop with Bolaji for students and artists.

Ends

For further press information or images please contact Hayley Lewis on 01707 286065 or email h.lewis4@herts.ac.uk

Image above: Adébayo Bolaji with his work "Chibok", 2016, mixed media on cotton duck canvas. Image credit Amoroso Films.

Notes for Editors

Exhibition details

5 Oct 2021 – 14 Jan 2022

Open Mon – Fri 10am – 4pm, Sat 11am – 3pm

[Access may be limited due to restrictions relating to Covid-19]

Art & Design Gallery, University of Hertfordshire, College Lane Campus, Hatfield, AL10 9AB

Digital exhibition available at www.uharts.co.uk

About Adébayo Bolaji

Adébayo Bolaji (born 1983) is a multi-disciplinary artist living and working in London. At the centre of his practice is a dialogue of change and the focus of the individual within a connecting society. The use of vibrant and metaphorical language is a crucial element in his work. Bolaji has exhibited widely in London, Zurich and Berlin, and held artist residencies in New York and Margate. He has a background in theatre having trained at the Central School of Speech and Drama in London, as well as obtaining a law degree from London Guildhall University. He is also a published poet and the founder and Artistic Director of Ex Nihilo Theatre Group. Bolaji is represented by Beers London.

www.adebayobolaji.com @adebayobolaji

About UH Arts, University of Hertfordshire

UH Arts offers a vibrant arts and cultural programme for the University of Hertfordshire's campus and local communities, working cross-arts with artists and performers. With a programme of exhibitions, performances, residencies and engagement projects, UH Arts delivers excellent, innovative arts and culture with associated research; offering space for artists and performers to experiment, and audiences to engage and co-produce. Working in collaboration with St Albans Museum + Gallery, and other key partners, UH Arts presents off-campus exhibitions and events, displaying works from around the world in new contexts.

www.uharts.co.uk @unihertsarts

About the University of Hertfordshire

The University of Hertfordshire is a vibrant, inclusive, campus-based institution with a vision to be internationally renowned as the UK's leading business-facing university. It is innovative and enterprising and challenges individuals and organisations to excel. All courses are underpinned by industry insight and powerful research ensuring our student community of over 24,600 graduates are equipped with the skills and attributes for successful professional lives. The University has excellent progression rates to employment – 96.5% of students are in employment or further study six months after graduating* - and its teaching expertise has recently been awarded the top gold ranking in the Government's Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) 2018. It is one of the top 150 universities in the world under 50 years old, according to the Times Higher Education 150 under 50 rankings 2018.

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1. Adébayo Bolaji, Trojan, 2020, found materials, 237x94x205cm. Image credit Amoroso Films.
2. Adébayo Bolaji in Art and Design Gallery ahead of his solo exhibition 2021. Image credit Amoroso Films.
3. Adébayo Bolaji, Breakthrough, 2019, mixed media on coarse grain jute, 560 x 195 cm. Image credit Amoroso Films.