

Abe Odedina: You Give Me Fever
September 17 - October 29, 2022

Opening reception for the artist: Saturday, September 17 from 6:00 – 8:00 pm

Diane Rosenstein Gallery is proud to announce *You Give Me Fever*, a solo exhibition of paintings by Abe Odedina – a Nigerian-British artist who lives and works in London and Bahia, Brazil. These paintings, mostly made in 2022, are an exploration of different aspects of desire. This is the artist's solo debut in Los Angeles.

Odedina's vibrant compositions center on the figure, but are not portraits in the traditional sense, although they do employ many devices associated with portraiture. The artist describes them as "figurative propositions, devices to explore ideas around our shared humanity, the triumphs and tragedies of daily life." Using acrylic paint on a plywood panel, rather than canvas, the paintings in *You Give Me Fever* embody all the solidity and practicality of shop fronts or municipal murals. Though he is a self-described folk artist, Odedina implicitly and explicitly questions the validity of 'folk art' as a discrete category.

The artist, who was born in Ibadan, and had early training in architecture, acknowledges a diverse range of influences, from Haitian Vodou practitioners and painters of the Sacred heart, to anonymous African craftspeople and various traditions of African Studio Photography. His artist statement explains, "What I hope for is a charged dialogue, a uniquely contemporary conversation not only between peoples but between cultures and epochs."

He works with bold color, predominantly blues, reds and greens, and constructs his environments using carefully considered architectural details. Many of these compositions involve water, or position figures at a window, with a view of the sea, and include a formal nod to Renaissance portraiture. The artist created many of the paintings in *You Give Me Fever* at his studio in Salvador, Brazil, where "glimpses of sea through windows is part of my daily life...It's constant presence can at times be taken for granted, but in my paintings it is the source of all potentialities in existence, life giving and life destroying, the liquid counterpart to light, the source and grave of all things in the universe."

Odedina acknowledges that "objects can carry huge emotional freight..painting by its very nature can...confer a degree of significance and symbolic power to any painted objects." In this context, there are recurring motifs in his work, including birds and

musical instruments. In Yoruba traditions, birds are “a divine manifestation — they represent transcendence, the ability to communicate with gods and to enter a higher state of consciousness and thought, inspired by the rich figurative and oral traditions of African art.”

Infused with magical realism, Odedina’s works revive and deconstruct quintessential classical themes spanning from ancient Greek to Yoruba mythologies to create a charged dialogue between epochs, cultures, and peoples.

Abe Odedina (Nigeria, b. 1960) is an artist based in London and Brazil. He began his painting practice in 2007, after a successful career in architecture. His work is in the collection of The British Government Art Collection, the Serge Tiroche Collection and the Collection of Jorge Pérez. Solo exhibitions include *Cutting Edge*, Ed Cross Fine Art, London (2021); *Birds of Paradise*, Copeland Gallery, London (2019); *True Love*, The Department Store, London (2018); and *Say it Loud*, 1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair, Somerset House, London, (2017). His paintings were included in *Talisman in the Age of Difference*, Stephen Friedman Gallery (2018); as well as group shows with Ed Cross Fine Art, London (2021); London Art Fair (2021); *Art X Lagos* (2020); *Get Up, Stand Up Now*, Somerset House, London (2019); and *BP Portrait Award*, National Portrait Gallery, London (2013), among others.