

artillery

GALLERY ROUNDS: Abe Odedina

Diane Rosenstein Gallery

by Donasia Tillery | Oct 19, 2022

Abe Odedina's "You Give Me Fever" embodies the spirit of a universal human emotion: desire. In his Los Angeles solo debut on view at Diane Rosenstein Gallery, the architect-turned-painter considers desire with a kaleidoscopic gaze, depicting deep-seated longings for freedom, for triumph and for connection. The ambitious collection of nineteen acrylic paintings on plywood panels invokes influences ranging from Yoruba to Greek mythologies in an effort to mine the sublimity of longing. Its manifold symbolism suspends the exhibition just above time and space, implying the timeless universality of its insights.

Odedina's subjects are often witnessed in their solitude. Some we find contemplating the open road, others seeking the affection of a lover. Yet, despite the diversity of their circumstances, recurrent imagery of water, birds, butterflies and a shared landscape suggest that they are actually occupying the same affective space, embodying different aspects of the very same feeling.

In my personal favorites, *High Roller AM (2022)* and *High Roller PM (2022)*, mirror images of a young child encapsulate the best of desire. Standing confidently against the exhibition's expansive oceanic frontier, they appear optimistic about the path ahead. Here, desire seems to represent a space of boundless possibility. On the coast of the same body of water, the figures in *Triumphal Arch (2022)* co-create a desirous realm of loving veneration and euphoric surrender. And in the exhibition's titular work, *You Give Me Fever (2022)*, viewers are invited into an intimate moment of stillness between two people in bed. They are physically close, and yet, they strike me as profoundly wistful, their gazes evading one another. Situating these polarities within one aesthetic landscape, Odedina reminds viewers that desire is complex terrain imbued with both elation and melancholy—a universe unto itself.

The show's emotional acuity is facilitated by Odedina's skillful use of color and layering. Lively hues layered atop plywood panels that are first covered in black acrylic paint undergird the artist's prismatic outlook. From underneath his subjects' otherwise vibrant exteriors, resounding shadows peek through. Balancing these many dimensions of light and shadow in an impressive act of equilibrium, Odedina positions each manifestation of desire as an indispensable expression of human experience.

Abe Odedina

You Give Me Fever

On view through October 29, 2022

Diane Rosenstein Gallery