

Modern Art

Frida Orupabo
Things I saw at night

25 March – 20 May 2023
Helmet Row, EC1

Modern Art is pleased to announce an exhibition of new work by Frida Orupabo. This is her first solo exhibition with Modern Art.

Frida Orupabo's works are, in some sense, solutions to problems; the problems being that certain images do not exist and need to be created. Working mainly with collage, but also spanning sculpture and video, Orupabo's work synthesises fragments of bodies to reconstruct narratives and imagine new configurations of subjectivity denied by colonial legacies. More often than not, the figures in Orupabo's images are Black women, although the categorisation of gender, race and family heritage are not only questioned; they become the locus of her explorations. Mining digital archives mostly online, Orupabo's process starts on a small-scale, collaging images on screen, but these often grow into much bigger, life-sized characters in the room. Enlarged, printed in tiles, cut out, and then pinned together, Orupabo's process of combining images retains a hand-made simplicity, which carries within it a sense of possibility for play, experimentation and spontaneity. This liveliness is joined by a depth of difficult emotion held in her subjects – rage, sadness, or desolation, for instance - whose faces stare back, as though to challenge their viewers to a duel. Orupabo's exhibition at Modern Art contains several new and recent wall-based collages, but also includes video work and sculpture, bringing together the multiple facets of her practice and elucidating her ways of thinking through making.

Born in Norway of dual Norwegian and Nigerian heritage, Orupabo began making collages in her early twenties as a means to work through her own complex relationship to home and identity. Later, Orupabo studied sociology and worked as a social worker, and began to publish her archive of collected and reconstructed images on Instagram. Her account, @nemiepeba, began anonymously and quietly as a collection of working images for a small audience, but soon grew in its following. Since her inclusion in Arthur Jafa's exhibition at the Serpentine Gallery in 2017, Orupabo has exhibited widely internationally.

Frida Orupabo was born in 1986 in Sarpsborg and lives and works in Oslo. Selected solo exhibitions include Nicola Vassell Gallery, New York, NY, USA (2022); Fotomuseum Winterthur, Switzerland (2022); Kunsthall Trondheim, Norway (2021); Hours After, Stevenson, Johannesburg, South Africa (2020); Medicine for a Nightmare, Kunstnernes Hus, Oslo; The Mouth and the Truth, Portikus, Frankfurt am Main, Germany (2019); and A House is a House, Galerie Nordenhake, Berlin, Germany (2019). Selected group exhibitions include Kiasma Finnish National Gallery, Oslo, Norway (2022); Hasselblad Foundation, Gothenburg, Sweden (2021); Stevenson, Cape Town, South Africa (2021); Huis Marseille, Amsterdam, the Netherlands (2020); Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden (2019), Serpentine Gallery, London (2017). She has participated in the Munch Triennial, Munchmuseet, Oslo, Norway (2022); 34th Bienal de São Paulo, Fundação Bienal, São Paulo, Brazil (2021); and the 58th International Art Exhibition, Biennale Arte, Venice, Italy (2019).

For more information, please contact Sam Talbot (sam@sam-talbot.com) or Pascale de Graaf (pascale@modernart.net)

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Gallery 1



The "haunted" house, 2023
video installation
edition of 3 + 1 AP



THINKING MAKES a Person Sad, 2023
CMYK print on anodised aluminium
59.7 x 66.3 x 31.5 cm
23 1/2 x 26 1/8 x 12 3/8 in
edition of 3 + 1 AP



The Twin, 2023
wallpaper
dimensions variable
edition of 5 + 2 AP

Gallery 2



Leading the Blind, 2022
collage with paper pins on birch
plywood panel
235.5 x 185 cm
92 3/4 x 72 7/8 in



Ritual, 2022
collage with paper pins on birch
plywood panel
76 x 58 cm
29 7/8 x 22 7/8 in



Three Legged Woman, 2022
collage with paper pins on birch
plywood panel
99 x 148 cm
39 x 58 1/4 in



You Better Know, 2022
collage with paper pins on birch
plywood panel
197 x 117 cm
77 1/2 x 46 in



Eye, 2022
collage with paper pins on birch
plywood panel
30 x 60 cm
11 3/4 x 23 5/8 in



Sandwoman, 2022
collage with paper pins on birch
plywood panel
196 x 145 cm
77 1/8 x 57 1/8 in



The Onlooker, 2022
collage with paper pins on birch
plywood panel
197 x 65 cm
77 1/2 x 25 5/8 in



Leather on skin, 2022
collage with paper pins on birch
plywood panel
120 x 82 cm
47 1/4 x 32 1/4 in



Car Ride, 2022
collage with paper pins on birch
plywood panel
97 x 230 cm
38 1/4 x 90 1/2 in