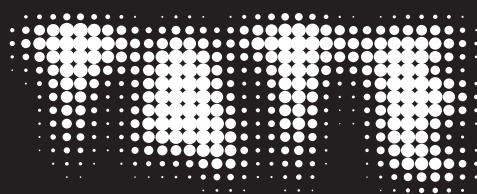


LYNETTE YIADOM-BOAKYE
FLY IN LEAGUE WITH
THE NIGHT

Until 26 February 2023

LARGE PRINT GUIDE



OUTSIDE THE EXHIBITION

LYNETTE YIADOM-BOAKYE
TO FLY IN LEAGUE WITH THE NIGHT
24 Nov 2022 – 26 February 2023

Lynette Yiadom-Boakye (born in London in 1977) makes figurative paintings drawn from a variety of source material. Her figures inhabit deliberately enigmatic settings that are timeless and often abstract. Working in oil paint on canvas or coarse linen, Yiadom-Boakye has developed a language of painting that is uniquely her own.

Fly In League With The Night is the first exhibition to celebrate Yiadom-Boakye's work in depth. It spans work made at the Royal Academy Schools, where she graduated in 2003, up to her recent paintings made in 2020 during the coronavirus pandemic. Yiadom-Boakye has been closely involved in the selection and arrangement of her work. The exhibition evolves according to the dynamics and conversations between paintings, without a strict chronology. 'I wanted to think about a dialogue between the works, much the way I do when they're in the studio, and also to consider the sequence or rhythm as you move through the galleries.'

The individual paintings do not have explanatory labels. Instead, you are invited to engage with Yiadom-Boakye's works on their own terms.

'There are so many things that I do or think about when painting that I can't put into words. Any attempt at explanation can become, at best, superfluous. At worst, wholly inaccurate.'

Yiadam-Boakye is both a painter and a writer of prose and poetry. For her, the two forms of creativity are separate but intertwined. 'I write about the things I can't paint and paint the things I can't write about,' she has said. She refers to her paintings' evocative titles as 'an extra brush-mark'. They are integral to each work but are not an explanation or description.

Lynette Yiadom-Boakye

Fly In League With The Night

24 November 2022 – 26 February 2023

Curated by Andrea Schlieker, Director of Exhibitions and Displays, Tate Britain and Isabella Maidment, Curator of Contemporary British Art with Amy Emmerson Martin and Aïcha Mehrez, Assistant Curators

Supported by

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Exhibition build: M.C. Designers

Graphic design: Soraya Chumroo,
Leonardo de Vasconcelos Santana, Mónica Oliveira,
Adriana Rojas-Víquez, John Philip Sage, Tate Design Studio

Graphics printing and installation: Albemarle Graphics

Installation: Juleigh Gordon-Orr, Mikei Hall,
Kwai Lau, Andy Shiel, Liam Tebbs, Tate Art Handling

Interpretation: Zoe Bromberg-McCarthy, Isabella Maidment,
Aïcha Mehrez, Andrea Schlieker, Minnie Scott

Lighting: Lightwaves Limited

Lynette Yiadom-Boakye **A Passion Like No Other** 2012
Collection of Lonti Ebers © Lynette Yiadom-Boakye

Lynette Yiadom-Boakye **A Bounty Left Unpaid** 2011
Private collection © Lynette Yiadom-Boakye

Anticlockwise from Introduction

Yiadam-Boakye's fictitious figures inhabit private worlds. Though they might smile or glance in our direction, they are primarily concerned with their own business. They peer through binoculars at things that we can't see, reflect on thoughts or have conversations, the subjects of which remain in Yiadam-Boakye's invented realm.

The mood of each painting is crafted through careful attention to facial expressions, gestures and colour. Her evocative titles offer a hint of possible narratives. Each painted scene has a sense of a self-contained story, but one which may have another chapter for us to explore somewhere else in her body of work.

The paintings encourage us to wonder what an enigmatic smile could mean or what song the dancers might be moving to. If they are performing, it is not necessarily for us. There is a subtle resistance in the figures' independence and introspection. Yiadam-Boakye has described her compositions as '...composites, ciphers, riddles. Of the world but only partially concerned with it. Concerned with the part that gives them life, less bothered by the rest.'

The figures in Yiadom-Boakye's paintings have a timeless quality. They are deliberately difficult to place. She rarely includes anything that might allude to the style, fashion or culture of a specific period. There are very few shoes in her paintings, for instance. Few objects tie them to a particular era. In the domestic interiors too, architectural and design details are absent. Her figures are undefined by any surrounding context.

This uncertainty is important to the way Yiadom-Boakye works. The timeless quality she creates places particular demands on us: stirring our curiosity and imagination.

Quote:

I learned how to paint from looking at painting and I continue to learn from looking at painting. In that sense, history serves as a resource. But the bigger draw for me is the power that painting can wield across time.

— Lynette Yiadom-Boakye

Quote:

I work from scrapbooks, I work from images I collect, I work from life a little bit, I seek out the imagery I need. I take photos. All of that is then composed on the canvas. This lets me really think through the painting, to allow these to be paintings in the most physical sense, and build a language that didn't feel as if I was trying to take something out of life and translate it into painting, but that actually allowed the paint to do the talking.

— Lynette Yiadom-Boakye

Yiadam-Boakye initially learned to paint by working from life. But she changed her thinking and approach to painting at an early stage, while studying at Falmouth School of Art, on the Cornish coast. She realised that she was less interested in making portraits of people and more in the act of painting itself, always at a slight remove from reality. 'Being there, living away from London, in this quiet and beautiful place and with no particular expectations of what I should be doing. That was an education in itself. And a liberation of sorts.'

Painting itself is a language for Yiadam-Boakye, a powerful means of communicating beyond words. She begins with a colour, a composition, a gesture, or a particular direction of the light. Found images, memory, literature and the history of painting are all sources for her work. Each painting is a composite of different movements and poses, worked out on the surface of the canvas. The history of painting is important to Yiadam-Boakye, and her work asserts its ongoing potential for making meaning today.

Quote:

My relationship to time is perhaps that of anyone who's never felt particularly fixed anywhere.

— Lynette Yiadom-Boakye

Quote:

'Blackness has never been other to me. Therefore, I've never felt the need to explain its presence in the work any more than I've felt the need to explain my presence in the world, however often I'm asked. I've never liked being told who I am, how I should speak, what to think and how to think it. I've never needed telling. I get that from my family. Across generations, we've always known who we are. To be measured relative to something that actually has nothing to do with you or your experience, some self-appointed superior, the ghost of who you ought to be... none of this has ever made any sense and yet somehow you live with it, live in it. But the idea of infinity, of a life and a world of infinite possibilities, where anything is possible for you, unconstrained by the nightmare fantasies of others, to have the presence of mind to walk as wildly as you will, that's what I think about most, that is the direction I've always wanted to move in.

Clockwise from the exhibition entrance

Quote:

**At Ease As The Day Breaks Beside Its Erasure
And At Pains To Temper The Light
At Liberty Like The Owl When The Need Comes Knocking
To Fly In League With The Night.
— Lynette Yiadom-Boakye**

Following my own nose and doing as I damned well pleased always seemed to me to be the most radical thing I could do. It isn't so much about placing black people in the canon as it is about saying that we've always been here, we've always existed, self-sufficient, outside of nightmares and imaginations, pre and post "discovery", and in no way defined or limited by who sees us.'

— Lynette Yiadom-Boakye

Inside the exhibition

Anticlockwise from room entrance

Bird Of Paradise

2009

Oil paint on canvas

Courtesy of Omer Tiroche Gallery, London
X77159

First

2003

Oil paint on canvas

Laurie Fitch
X77145

Any Number Of Preoccupations

2010

Oil paint on canvas

Dr Kenneth Montague / The Wedge Collection, Toronto

X77168

Black Allegiance To The Cunning

2018

Oil paint on linen

Sheldon Inwentash and Lynn Factor, Toronto

X78286

Elephant

2014

Oil paint on canvas

Courtesy the Artist, Corvi-Mora, London,
and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

X77203

Mystic Edifice

2020

Oil paint on linen

Courtesy the Artist, Corvi-Mora, London,
and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

X82028

Clockwise from room entrance

Fiscal Playsuit

2008

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection – Italy

X77154

Pale For The Rapture

2016

Oil paint on linen

Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris

X77220

Daydreaming Of Devils

2016

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection.

Courtesy the Artist, Corvi-Mora, London,
and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

X77223

A Toast To The Health Of A Heathen

2014

Oil paint on canvas

AC and Thelma Hudgins

X77206

To Improvise A Mountain

2018

Oil paint on linen

Private collection.

Courtesy of the Artist, Corvi-Mora, London
and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

X77235

Just Above The Cloud

2014

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection.

Courtesy the Artist, Corvi-Mora, London,
and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

X77198

To Tell Them Where It's Got To

2013

Oil paint on canvas

Purchased through the Contemporary Art Society's Acquisition Scheme for Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery, with the additional support of Corvi-Mora Gallery, 2013. On loan from Plymouth City Council, The Box, Plymouth X77194

Six Birds In The Bush

2015

Oil paint on linen

Private collection

X77210

Penny For Them

2014

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection, Miami, Florida

X77200

No Such Luxury

2012

Oil paint on canvas

Danny and Manizeh Rimer, London

X77188

Repurposed For Songs

2020

Oil paint on linen

The TKMB Collection

X82030

Clockwise from room entrance

Wrist Action

2010

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection.

Courtesy Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

X77569

Bound Over To Keep The Faith

2012

Oil paint on canvas

Defares Collection

X77182

Accompanied To The Kindness

2012

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection.

Courtesy the artist, Corvi-Mora, London, and Jack Shainman
Gallery, New York

X77617

6pm Madeira

2011

Oil paint on canvas

Tracey and Phillip Riese

X77570

Avalanche

2011

Oil paint on canvas

Private collector

X77172

11pm Tuesday

2010

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection.

Courtesy the artist, Corvi-Mora, London,
and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

X77161

From left to right:

Cage

2006

Oil paint on linen

The Robert Devereux Collection

X77151

Fourth Magic

2008

Oil paint on linen

Ekow Eshun and Jenny Berglund

X77152

Razorbill

2020

Oil paint on linen

Tate. Purchased with funds provided
by the European Collection Circle 2021

T15723

Further Pressure From Cannibals

2010

Oil paint on canvas

Joeonna Bellorado-Samuels, New York

X77166

Clockwise from room entrance

Debut

2010

Oil paint on canvas

Collection of Kimberley and Elliot Perry, Memphis
X77567

Greenfinch

2012

Oil paint on canvas

Courtesy the artist, Corvi-Mora, London,
and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York
X77178

From left to right:

In Lieu Of Keen Virtue

2017

Oil paint on linen

Private collection.

Courtesy the artist, Corvi-Mora, London,
and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

X77228

Solitaire

2015

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection.

Courtesy the artist, Corvi-Mora, London,
and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

X77213

Upwind, Upstream And Upstairs

2019

Oil paint on linen

Private collection.

Courtesy the artist, Corvi-Mora, London,
and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

X82022

Confidences

2010

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection.

Courtesy the artist, Corvi-Mora, London,
and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

X77572

The Matters

2016

Oil paint on linen

Private collection.

Courtesy the artist, Corvi-Mora, London,
and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

X77219

The High-Mind And Disrepute

2020

Oil paint on linen

Courtesy the Artist, Corvi-Mora, London, and Jack Shainman
Gallery, New York

X82032

Clockwise from room entrance

The Generosity

2010

Oil paint on canvas

Tate. Presented by Tate Patrons 2012

T13654

Alibi For Crude

2014

Oil paint on canvas

Courtesy of the Hiscox Collection

X77201

Hard Wet Epic

2010

Oil paint on canvas

Collection of Noel Kirnon and Michael Paley

X77162

A Passion Like No Other

2012

Oil paint on canvas

Collection of Lonti Ebers

X77191

A Whistle In A Wish

2018

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection.

Courtesy the artist, Corvi-Mora, London,
and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

X77237

A Bounty Left Unpaid

2011

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection

X77173

6pm Cadiz

2012

Oil paint on canvas

Danjuma Collection

X77180

The Counter

2010

Oil paint on canvas

Carol and John Finley

X77169

Amaranthine

2018

Oil paint on linen

Private collection.

Courtesy the artist, Corvi-Mora, London,
and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

X77234

Enter the room on the left

Clockwise from room entrance

A Fever Of Lilies

2016

Oil paint on linen (diptych)

Collection of Jackson Tang, Florence, Italy

X77225

For The Sake Of Angels

2018

Oil paint on canvas

Promised Gift of Mr and Mrs Demetrios

T. Patrinos to Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh

X77236

Alabaster for Infidels

2019

Oil paint on linen

Private collection.

Courtesy the Artist, Corvi-Mora, London,
and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

X86968

A Transformation

2022

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection.

Courtesy the Artist, Corvi-Mora, London,
and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

X86971

Few Reasons Left To Like You

2020

Oil paint on linen

Courtesy the Artist, Corvi-Mora, London,
and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

X82027

Enter the room on the left

Clockwise from room entrance

The Cream And The Taste

2013

Oil paint on canvas

Courtesy of Duro Olowu

X77196

The Woman That Watches

2015

Oil paint on canvas

Rennie Collection, Vancouver

X78674

Quorum

2020

Oil paint on linen

Private collection.

Courtesy the artist, Corvi-Mora, London,
and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

X82024

Geranium Love Sonnet

2010

Oil paint on canvas

Collection of David Madee

X77165

Condor And The Mole

2011

Oil paint on canvas

Arts Council Collection,
Southbank Centre, London
X77177

No Objection To Noises

2019

Oil paint on linen

Private collection.

Courtesy the artist, Corvi-Mora, London,
and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York
X82023

Clockwise from room entrance

Citrine By The Ounce

2014

Oil paint on canvas

Doreen Chambers & Philippe Monrougié

X77199

Songs In The Head

2012

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection, courtesy of Elizabeth Wingate

X77184

Later Or Louder Or Softer Or Sooner

2013

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection.

Courtesy the artist, Corvi-Mora, London,
and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

X77193

An Education

2010

Oil paint on canvas

Collection of Ellen Stern

X77568

Diplomacy I

2009

Oil paint on linen

Pascale Revert

X77155

Nous Etions

2007

Oil paint on canvas

The Studio Museum in Harlem; Museum purchase made possible by a gift from Pippa Cohen 2018.17.1

X77148

Clockwise from room entrance

The Ventricular

2018

Oil paint on linen

Private collection.

Courtesy the artist, Jack Shainman Gallery, New York
and Corvi-Mora, London

X77238

Nightjar

2022

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection.

Courtesy the Artist, Corvi-Mora, London,
and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

X86970

A Hatred In May

2020

Oil paint on linen

Collection Walker Art Center, Minneapolis;

Gift of the TKMB Collection, 2021

X82025

Nightingale

2009

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection

X77160

Dangle The Keys To A Kingdom

2022

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection.

Courtesy the Artist, Corvi-Mora, London,
and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

X86969

Highriser

2009

Oil paint on canvas

Michael Roets

X77158

The Stygian Silk

2020

Oil paint on linen

Private collection.

Courtesy the artist, Jack Shainman Gallery, New York
and Corvi-Mora, London

X82033

Tie The Temptress To The Trojan

2016

Oil paint on linen

Collection of Michael Bertrand, Toronto

X77215

All Manner Of Comforts

2016

Oil paint on linen

Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris

X77217

Coagulant Dangers

2018

Oil paint on linen

Private collection.

Courtesy the artist, Jack Shainman Gallery, New York
and Corvi-Mora, London

X77241

Lynette Yiadom-Boakye has shared a list of books that inspire her:

Hilton Als

White Girls 2013

James Baldwin

Giovanni's Room 1956

The Fire Next Time 1963

A Dialogue (With Nikki Giovanni) 1973

Just Above My Head 1979

Percival Everett

Erasure 2001

Ted Hughes

Crow 1970

Zora Neale Hurston

Their Eyes Were Watching God 1937

Marlon James

John Crow's Devil 2005

The Book of Night Women 2009

A Brief History of Seven Killings 2014

Glenn Ligon

Yourself in the World 2011

Toni Morrison

Beloved 1987

Flannery O'connor

Wise Blood 1952

A Good Man Is Hard to Find 1953

William Shakespeare

Hamlet 1603

Oscar Wilde

The Picture of Dorian Gray 1891

Salome 1893/4

You can find these titles in the Tate shop.

Selection of tracks:

Scan the barcode with the Spotify app and listen to a selection of tracks chosen by Lynette Yiadom-Boakye:



Open  | Search  | Scan 

You can also hear the playlist at
tate.org.uk/yiadom-boakye-playlist

