

Dreams from the Deep End
Modupeola Fadugba



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Dreams from the Deep End Modupeola Fadugba

"When ice cream sales go up, drownings increase. Does ice cream cause drowning? No, the lurking variable is a hot summer day, which boosts ice cream sales and swimming."
The Seattle Times

Curated by Katherine Finerty
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How to Dream from the Deep End

Katherine Finerty, Curator

It's summer in Harlem and the air is heavy with dreamy languor. The heat summons universal fantasies of how best to cool off: breezes by a bustling pier; ice cream that swiftly melts down your hand; plunging into public swimming pools – the rites of summer...

Modupeola Fadugba: Dreams from the Deep End presents an immersive installation, evoking the pool as a nostalgic yet contested space, where communities gather to play, learn, rest, and resist. Yet, within this watery oasis, there also lurk more turbulent experiences of risk, exclusion, and the looming chance of drowning. Nonetheless, in the deep end, resilience surfaces and togetherness triumphs.

Togo-born, Nigerian artist Modupeola Fadugba's multi-media practice encompasses painting, drawing, and socially engaged installation, which address ideas of identity, social justice, and game theory in order to navigate cultural hierarchies. Furthermore, as an avid and lifelong swimmer, Modupeola has a profound personal affinity for the pool and its capacity to foster health, creativity, and confidence. It thus remains a potent recurring motif throughout her diverse bodies of work.

Dreams from the Deep End, shown during the summer of 2018, at Gallery 1957, expands her focus on powerful Black figures together in water. In the artist's celebrated on-going series *Synchronised Swimmers*, one is submerged in an abstract underwater world, filled with dynamic, moving bodies, weaving stories about teamwork, friendship, and unity. These swimmers function as a visual tool for Fadugba to explore the ever-changing challenges experienced by artists, and the power of togetherness to defy the odds – from transcending the rules of a game to defying debilitating stereotypes.

During Fadugba's residency at ISCP in New York City this summer, she sought to contextualise her

focus on swimming within the greater context of visibility, access, and representation. Her research has been greatly informed by Jeff Wiltse's publication *Contested Waters: A Social History of Swimming Pools*, which explores the history of public pools and their privatisation, in relation to race politics and community life in America. In the artist's search to explore the visibility of black swimming bodies and consider elements of learning, collaboration, and competition, she found inspiration in The Harlem Honeys and Bears – a synchronised swimming team of senior citizens, who perform sensational water acrobatics and offer free swimming lessons to local children.

Through paintings and multimedia installations, Modupeola represents the trials and triumphs experienced by this extraordinary group and the communities they serve. Moreover, her interest in learning and recreation within the pool is a direct extension of the artist's fascination with game theory and statistics. Whilst studying economics and chemical engineering, Modupeola frequently came across this quintessential illustration of correlation versus causation: "When ice cream sales go up, drownings increase. Does ice cream cause drowning? No, the lurking variable is a hot summer day, which boosts ice cream sales and swimming." The juxtaposition of these two entities profoundly struck Modupeola: how might eating ice cream, one of her favourite pastimes, play against a deep-seated cultural fear within many black communities, in which youths are more likely to drown at a rate five times higher than other children? How can something ominous be balanced by something hopeful?

This deductive yet sincere logic has been ingrained in Fadugba's artistic practice since she worked on her award-winning project, *The People's Algorithm* (2014), an installation where participants play an interactive game, seeking to address the critical situation of education and unemployment in Nigeria. This work, and Fadugba's developing interest in inter-

disciplinary collaborations with other artists and local communities, illuminates the heart of her overarching practice and mission: to activate people through cultural exchange, collective consciousness, and states of motion – always ready to decipher and play.

And it was with this type of audience engagement in mind that the immersive underwater installation for *Dreams from the Deep End* was imagined. Upon entering the pool you might hear gently lapping water from a synchronised performance, or one of Coach Footé's rousing pep talks, resonating off the tiled walls of the Hansborough Recreation Center, in Harlem. After closely inspecting the artist's luminous experimentations in artistically rendering water, you're encouraged to sit back in a sun lounger and pick up a book about David Hockney, whose iconic depictions of aquatic surfaces the artist often turns to for inspiration. This sense of learning and listening, alongside conversation and recreation, is key to Modupeola's research-based work: connecting with communities.

Moreover, the artist's deep involvement with The Harlem Honeys and Bears this summer also resulted in a distinct change in her creative process, whereby abstraction evolved into narrative representation. Her characteristic depiction of synchronised swimmers, with delicate burnt paper, overlaid with pops of colour and splendid gold leaf, are now accompanied by new figures differing in age, gender, and purpose. Deep sea-blues and robust, powerful reds punctuate creamy pastels and meditative monochrome to present a new spectrum of the colours of water and people. Millennial pinks gain deeper meaning with reference to painted township buildings in Rwanda and the mysterious Lake Rose in Senegal; iridescent golds conjure up impressionist light as well as Ghana's contentious colonial and mining history; and the ever-present, red ball of unattainability, found in earlier series like *Tagged* (2013) and *Synchronised Swimmers* (2016-17) re-emerges as succulent cherries, fabulously

painted nails and lips, and even a satisfyingly spherical swim cap.

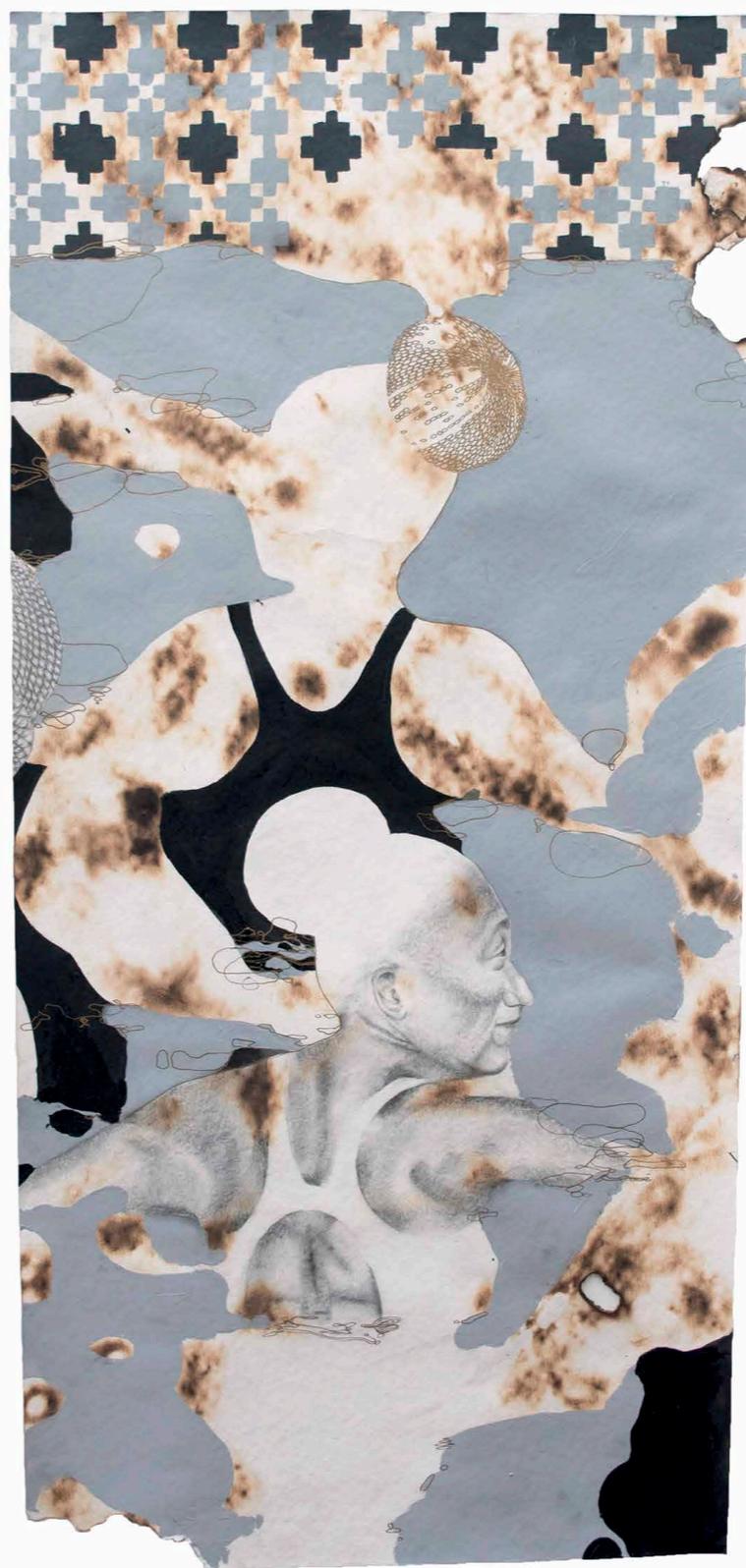
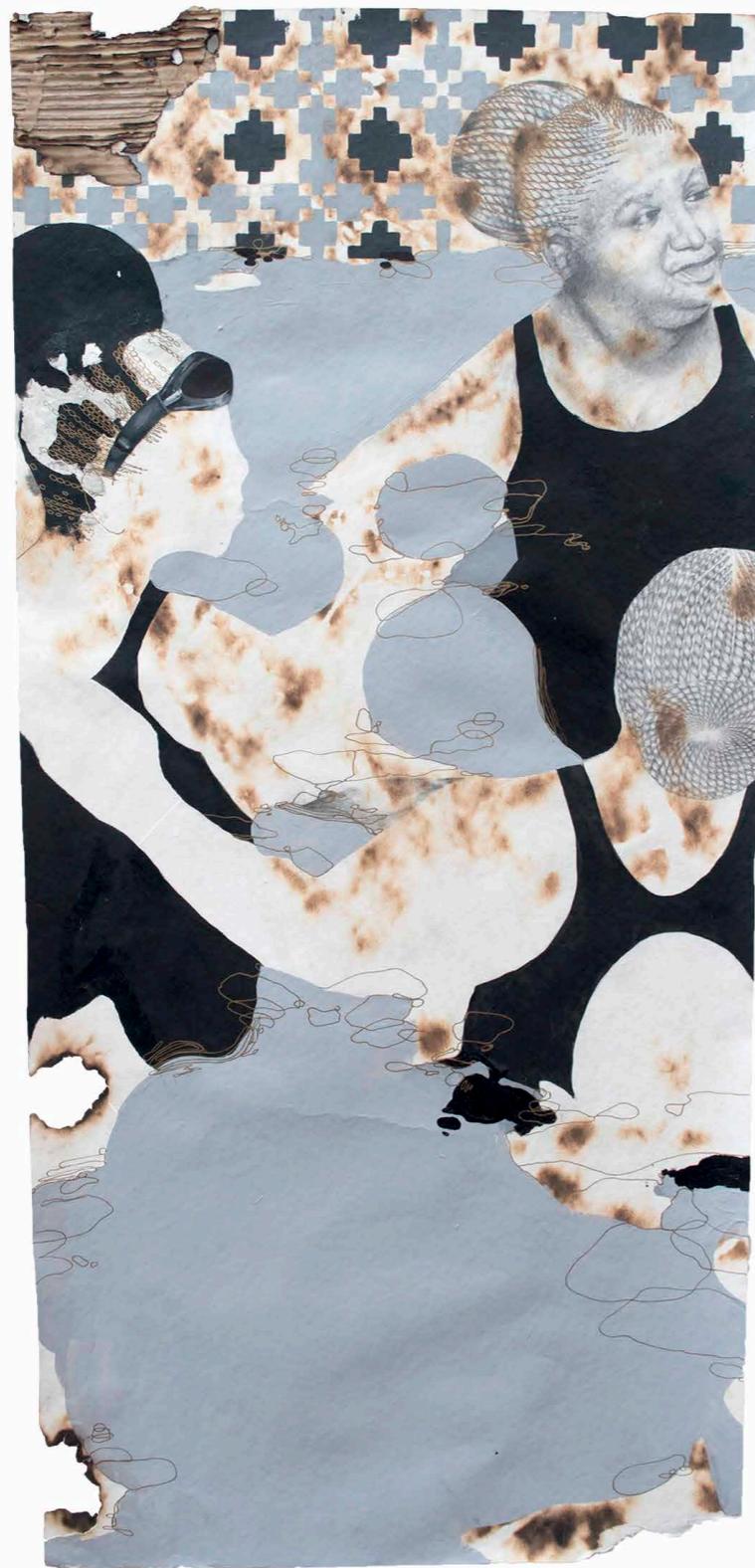
Ominous deep ends are now counterbalanced by emboldened scenes of swimming lessons, heroic lifeguards, and the tantalising nostalgia of cold, melting ice cream cones. Swimmers young and old come to life through bursts of detail in the form of alluring pool tiles, painstakingly rendered portraits, and intimate multimedia documentation. This new series thus presents a unique development of reverent realism in Fadugba's artistic practice, reflecting her aspiration to empower individual bodies and voices in this resilient community.

And now The Harlem Honeys and Bears have come to Ghana. Whilst developing this research-based project with Modupeola, we talked extensively about the significance of home, and what might happen when representations, relating so intimately to an African American audience in New York, travel to a gallery and cultural community in Accra? Modupeola had me read *Homegoing* by Yaa Gyasi, a young Ghanaian-American novelist, and everything started to synchronise: the novel starts in pre-colonial Ghana and ends up in contemporary Harlem, from the transatlantic slave trade to the inner-city pools of New York City. And thus our creative journey becomes historical, and a professional project becomes personal. How does one balance the socio-political hardship underpinning the lived experiences of people who not only survive but indeed thrive in these contested waters? With a grounding in home, this project honours The Harlem Honeys and Bears wholly and wholeheartedly: their bodies, their stories, their power.

Here, swimming pools represent safe and democratic spaces, where one rarely contemplates the dire truism to "sink or swim". In Modupeola Fadugba's sustainable poolscapes we're not just taught how to swim – we're taught how to dream from the deep end.

"The artist's deep involvement with The Harlem Honeys and Bears resulted in a distinct change in her creative process, whereby abstraction evolved into narrative representation. Her characteristic depiction of synchronised swimmers, with delicate burnt paper, overlaid with pops of colour and splendid gold leaf, are now accompanied by new figures differing in age, gender, and purpose. Deep sea-blues and robust, powerful reds punctuate creamy pastels and meditative monochrome to present a new spectrum of the colours of water and people."

Katherine Finerty



"The team members challenge norms around age, race and ability, not only by performing with defiant grace, but also by offering free swimming lessons to children in their neighbourhood... It is an encouraging story of using education and collaboration to overcome the stigma associated with black people not being able to navigate water."
Modupeola Fagugba



"'You know why I'm scared of the ocean?' She shook her head. 'It's not just because I'm scared of drowning. Though I guess I am. It's because of all that space. It's because everywhere I look, I see blue, and I have no idea where it begins. When I'm out there, I stay as close as I can to the sand, because at least then I know where it ends.'"

Yaa Gyasi
Homegoing (2016)





"From the 1920s to the 1950s, municipal pools served as centers of community life and arenas for public discourse. Hundreds and sometimes thousands of people gathered at these public spaces where the contact was sustained and interactive. Neighbours played, chatted, and flirted with one another, but they also fought with one another over who should and should not be allowed to swim and what sort of activities and clothing were appropriate for this intimate public space. In short, community life was fostered, monitored, and disputed at municipal pools."

Jeff Wiltse
Contested Waters (2010)

When We're in the Water, We Help Each Other

Kristen Windmuller-Luna
Sills Family Consulting Curator,
African Arts, Brooklyn Museum

How can you be one and many all at once?

In *Dreams from the Deep End*, Modupeola Fadugba considers this question through the Harlem Honeys and Bears, an all-black senior citizen synchronised swimming team. There is intimacy and ease in the joining of bodies here; cascading figures flow through one another, subsuming the individual for the whole. It is ease too — and even a remarkable surrender of ego — that describes Fadugba's deep relationship with the team, and the work nurtured during her International Studio and Curatorial Program, New York City residency.

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Whose bodies can be seen and celebrated? Whose bodies are beautiful? Certainly not just the youthful ones.

Fadugba's paintings of intertwined figures, encased in identical wide-strapped black swimsuits, with delicately rendered braided buns, challenge us to see and celebrate the body — especially the female body — in all its stages. While the uniform unites, its opaque shape sets off careful observation of musculature. The inevitability of the body's weight is ever-present here, as is a comfortableness with the body.

It is the viewer's task to read identity and age into mostly blank forms. Unselfconscious at seven, the *Ice Cream Girls* grasp cherry-topped waffle cones with tiny plump fingers. Feet splash, tongues lap, ice cream drips, and thoughts drift. At ease. Over time, gravity extends slender, carefully posed teenaged legs (*Indigo Onlookers*) into studied carriages, filled with grace (*Pink Honey*). Skin loosens, aged ligaments extend, yet Mr. Luther's enviable medal cache declares that power remains (*Medallion Man*).

Uniting each age is the artist's distinctive visual vocabulary of pigment and metal-layered burnt paper. Rich silver and gold leaf, abutting red and

black fields, suggest lacquerware (*Dreams from the Deep End*), while meandering golden lines evoke both shimmering liquid and the gilded repair of kintsugi — fractured ceramics made richer for their breaks. Subway tiles, pool tiles, gridded glass laid out to direct — '125th St' — or (caution!) 'DEEP' — become leitmotifs for Fadugba. Bent along curves, placed just so beneath outstretched legs, New York City's tiny geometry complements bold representations of the body.

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As Fadugba emphasised, moving past previous stories about The Honeys and Bears meant establishing trust. Putting time into their community has lent her works an unbridled sense of intimacy. In her films, as in her paintings, there is no estrangement from the water. Fadugba's own body submerged in the water with the team — as artist, filmmaker, and fellow swimmer — takes the concept of immersion to its zenith. Privileged — even peeping — underwater views present the body unbound from the world's weight and the pull of its physical forces. Filmed from overhead, they float, as if in space.

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In the studio, our conversation turned to an incomplete canvas, and the challenges of choosing who to depict in detail. Her openness to suggestions — and sensitivity to depiction — shouldn't have come as a surprise. Throughout her residency, Fadugba's studio has been as much a welcoming space for the team as their pool has been for her. Unable to see themselves in abstract figures, the team pushed for realistic representation: "We want to see ourselves." The result are works, like *Some Harlem Honeys*, where recognisable faces contrast with the featureless. Just as the swimmers favour group loyalty over individuality, Fadugba balanced her artistic desires with those of the team.

"When we're in the water, we help each other", says Mrs Monica Hale, Captain of the team, in the exhibition film. In creating *Dreams*, Fadugba and the swimmers were in the water together. There is a sense of ease, of flow, of give and take. A way to be many all at once, and, ultimately, for one to represent many.



"When we're in the water we help each other. And I think that's how I became captain because anything you ask me to do in the water, I can do it. I feel like I'm the Queen, like I'm in charge under there - like you know the moves that you can do, the things you can do under there - you can't do up here."
Captain Monica







"In Fadugba's films, as in her paintings, there is no estrangement from the water. Her own body submerged in the water with the team – as artist, filmmaker, and fellow swimmer – takes the concept of immersion to its zenith. Privileged – even peeping – underwater views present the body unbound from the world's weight and the pull of its physical forces. Filmed from overhead, they float, as in space."
Kristen Windmuller-Luna



In conversation:

Ibrahim Mahama and Modupeola Fadugba

Ibrahim Mahama: The way the exhibition *Dreams from the Deep End* was created is unlike any you've done before – the construction of the walls, how the paintings are arranged together with the setting of the pool and the screens set-up. What inspired this specific form?

Modupeola Fadugba: From the moment we chose the title *Dreams from the Deep End*, I imagined an immersive pool-scape; I knew that Marwan [Zakhem, Director of Gallery 1957] had the know-how and resources to realise other dimensions within his gallery, to construct stages and platforms, offering different levels to the space. The choice to float the works in glass within black frames was important to the structure of the work as well, creating an illusion of depth.

IM: The idea for the show is dealt with through film, collage, painting, and through the structure of the exhibition itself. The stage, which also functions as a platform to view some of the paintings, has part of the work incorporated in it. It both creates a window into the reality of the subject that you're dealing with, and works as a sculptural entity. And, of course, painting the walls blue alludes to a swimming pool. Was this combination important for you?

MF: Knowing that The Harlem Honeys and Bears synchronised swimming team, who I was working with, couldn't be physically present at the show, I wanted to invite them into the space in different ways. The overhead video projections show synchronised swimmers in neatly arranged formations – a circle, two parallel lines, a pyramid; but then, when you look at the underwater peep hole videos, below the surface, beneath the structured formations, it looks quite a mess – there's a lot of kicking around. I thought it was important to capture the contrast in perspective. It's hard work; when you see the swimming from below, you realise that these people are really strong. Also, knowing that I was going into another

community – African American, senior citizens – I realised that there were potentially many layers to what I was doing: the city of Harlem; the age group; this swimming pool – a space that was otherwise not really reserved for them as black people. It was this layering that made the case for the documentary – I wanted to observe their routines, watch them swim, ask what it looks like to retire, get old, to have time on your hands – but not really time within your life; and, to find out how these people spend their days and who they spend them with.

In most of my paintings, the swimmers are not even in water; they're just around it, sitting on benches, chatting, owning the space. And I chose the dark teal blue on the walls to immerse viewers in the 'deep end' – I think it forces people to reckon with their interpretations of colour, and its multiple and sometimes polarising associations.

IM: Could you imagine the work being in, say, an actual swimming pool hall?

MF: That's a really powerful thought! I'm sure there would be some defunct swimming pools – also very symbolic of the migration or displacement of black people into different neighbourhoods, white people into other neighbourhoods, and what that means for what they have access to – economically and socially. It might also be interesting to see the team occupy that space in some way. Seeing the swimmers perform is magical. It brings up so many ideas, and you get lost watching them. It's a very peaceful experience – you start thinking about getting older, and you get lost in the performance. Funnily enough though, you don't think too much about race; these are just people doing their thing.

IM: A significant aspect of your work is the technique: combining collaged paper, paint, using multiple layers to create the imagery. Some of the paintings seem realistic, and yet they're also quite abstract. How do you go about the construction of the surface?

MF: If you look at the *Default Lifeguard*, for example, which is more abstract, I started with a video still, and blocked out silhouettes of the bodies. The burning technique gives the body and the skin some materiality, colour and texture; the background colour – the water – then fills the negative space, or in some cases, positive space, depending on which is predominant. And I always rework the original reference image extensively; in reality, when you have an overhead view of synchronised swimmers, they never seem big, or huddled together; rather, because they are in a large expanse of water, each figure appears much smaller. This spacing used to irk me, so I would make the figures bigger and much closer together, so their formations become tighter, and, whatever shapes their bodies are trying to delineate are accentuated. I then layer the images with gold leaf, corrugated paper and fine line details for the water ripples and the braided hair.

IM: Is time a really important factor in making the work?

MF: Absolutely. The works require some distance and can easily be over-worked, so the process of creating is iterative and happens over fragmented bursts of productivity for each piece. That's also the thing about working with paper and burning; if you make a mistake, you can't retrieve that piece of burnt paper again, so you have to be careful – which is why, working on multiple works and getting your mind away from each, if you haven't decided on the next course of action, is helpful.

In interesting ways, working on several pieces simultaneously creates a dialogue and harmony between and within them. But, you know, there's always that one work that paralyses you with indecision; and then, one day, months later, as if by magic, everything crystallises. Sometimes I joke that the works are like stubborn children: they will eventually come around in their own time, and when they demand your attention, you'd better be prepared to work with them!

IM: Let's take *Some Harlem Honeys*: two of the characters are quite detailed; some of them just have the hair; some don't have any defined features, and a lot of their bodies are somehow merged into the water. How do you decide at what point the image you're creating is complete?

MF: It's interesting that you should choose this particular work, because it is really the transitional piece between the abstract works and the others that are in the show. I started it in Abuja, before going to New York, and before I met The Harlem Honeys and Bears. I worked from a photograph sent by the team. In the photo, most of the swimmers have their backs to the viewer, and are therefore faceless. In my abstract works, I had used silhouettes and detailed hairstyles to depict my swimmers, but because many of them were full-figured women, in my initial depiction, the rendering came across as mocking, exaggerated and caricature-like. Once I had met the team, I ended up making some figures more representational, to reflect my newly-established intimacy with them. In my documentary, one of the team members comes to my studio, points at the *Default Lifeguard*, and says she thought she was coming to view works of them: 'I know that's not supposed to be us!' It verified my hunch that I wouldn't be able to depict the team members in an abstract manner.

IM: How do art history and your own history – as an artist who studied engineering – influence the artistic choices you've made, in choosing one form over another, in terms of representation?

MF: I didn't study art formally, but when I was at school in the UK, I did it as a GCSE subject. I was enamoured with artists like Salvador Dali, MC Escher, Picasso, Manet, Degas... Even though I was inspired by all these white, male European artists, there's something in the subconscious that tells you that this is not a career for a black woman. You're not represented here at all; you are excluded from that narrative. That's also why, for me, it's more interesting to paint people like me; that representation is extremely important.

I studied chemical engineering, did a masters in economics and another in education. The common thread within those disciplines was the importance of looking at data to arrive at conclusions. There's

data that tells you that, in the United States, black children are drowning at 5-10 times the rate of white children. That's factual data – you can't refute it; it helps me decide what's important to create and for other people to see. Data-driven art [laughs]! You can talk in numbers and statistic, but people don't listen unless they can see it and make the connection. The idea that people can learn by seeing is at the fore of my practice. I think that's why I made the switch to become an artist, because data is faceless, nameless; but when you come in and you see a painting of an old woman at the pool, and she's life-size, or bigger than you, then it presents data about pool use, gender, race and age in a tangible way.

IM: Lastly, were the individual backgrounds of the people in the paintings influential?

MF: In my early conversations with the members, they'd just give me soundbites, like: 'I swim five times a week, keeps you out of the doctor's office!' They know that's what [documentary makers] want to hear. But when we got a little deeper, Mr Leroy, the team president told me he'd lost his son to gun violence just weeks earlier. How much do you want to press someone either for the sake of knowing them, or for the sake of your artwork? It was only when he would bring it up that we'd talk about it; but what is there to talk about, really, when one loses their child like that? I could have used this in the work, but decided, instead, to focus on representing the Black man as a winner, as in *Medallion Man*. This body of work is ultimately about swimming, about the community, their resilience and triumphs.





"I'm like super proud - why me out of all people? I don't know, but that's me - that's me and I'm happy when I'm near the water. That's my favourite place in the whole world."
Joyce

"It's an interesting thing, when you strip yourself down and you're half naked and people can trust you within that space. When you are talking about waters being 'contested' it really is an issue of trust: whether you trust not only the water, but also the people within that space with you."
Modupeola Fadugba



"When I first started working with The Harlem Honeys and Bears, I didn't realise that I would depict them with so much realism. They were really quite thrown off by the fact that my figures and their faces and bodies were so abstract, which made me reconsider how I would bring them to life in the paintings... This person has a name, this person has a character, this is someone that I met, had conversations with, and connected with."

Modupeola Fadugba



"There is a sense of ease, of flow, of give and take. A way to be many all at once, and, ultimately, for one to represent many"
Kristen Windmuller-Luna





Dreams from the Deep End

Modupeola Fadugba

When I created *Tagged* (2015–2016), my first series of paintings set within water, I was exploring the idea of newcomers navigating a harsh landscape – swimmers keeping their heads above rough waters and learning an unfamiliar terrain. In that tense existence, what matters is the shallow, but grave and simple, goal – not to drown; to survive. It was a parallel to my life four years ago, when I first dove deeply into my journey as an artist. Life since then has evolved, for me and for many of us in that position.

We are no longer trying to master the current. There is a sense of calm and familiarity. What was once a rip tide is now a serene pool. And now, as we swim, we are free to be mesmerised by what lies beneath the surface. There is a new set of goals; for many it's distance, for others speed and, for an enlightened few, depth. The individual loses focus, and we sharpen to a broader view of the team. Self-preservation becomes a communal act, and forging ahead in this newly bearable landscape requires collaboration, synchronicity, and trust.

For *Dreams in the Deep End* I explore community and teamwork in the water, through the lens of the fraught racial history of communal swimming pools. I uncover what it means for independent and autonomous players to move in tandem towards a unified destination. Each swimmer plays a unique but necessary role – agency and independence do not go away. In fact, the swimmers must make active decisions every day, based on their individual and collective roles. They might decide to sit still, as in the case of certain team members, whose synced micro-movements coalesce into an elegant performance, for even one movement out of line threatens the success of the collective. Or they may decide to project and heighten themselves, as in the case of the lifeguard or coach, who acts vigilantly to preserve serenity and safety, for even one moment of

losing sight of the broader terrain can result in grave implications to an individual or communal goal.

I was moved by the history of public pools in America, and especially intrigued by the notion of who has access to which spaces, and who feels comfortable in them. Issues around race and equality are pervasive throughout the legacy of black bodies in water, from the transatlantic slave trade to inner-city pools. In my research, Jeff Wilste's publication *Contested Waters: A Social History of Swimming Pools*, served as an invaluable resource, addressing the privatisation of US swimming pools during the second half of the 20th century, and its resulting effect on black community life.

While in residence this summer, at the International Studio & Curatorial Program (ISCP) in New York City, I also spent several months working with the acclaimed synchronised swim team, The Harlem Honeys and Bears. Every single athlete on this team is a black senior citizen, most of whom didn't start swimming until the age of 60. The team members challenge norms around age, race, and ability, not only by performing with defiant grace, but also by offering free swimming lessons to children in their neighbourhood. This is a particularly significant transfer of knowledge, as black youth drown at about five times the rate of other children. It is an encouraging story of using education and collaboration to overcome the stigma associated with black people not being able to navigate water.

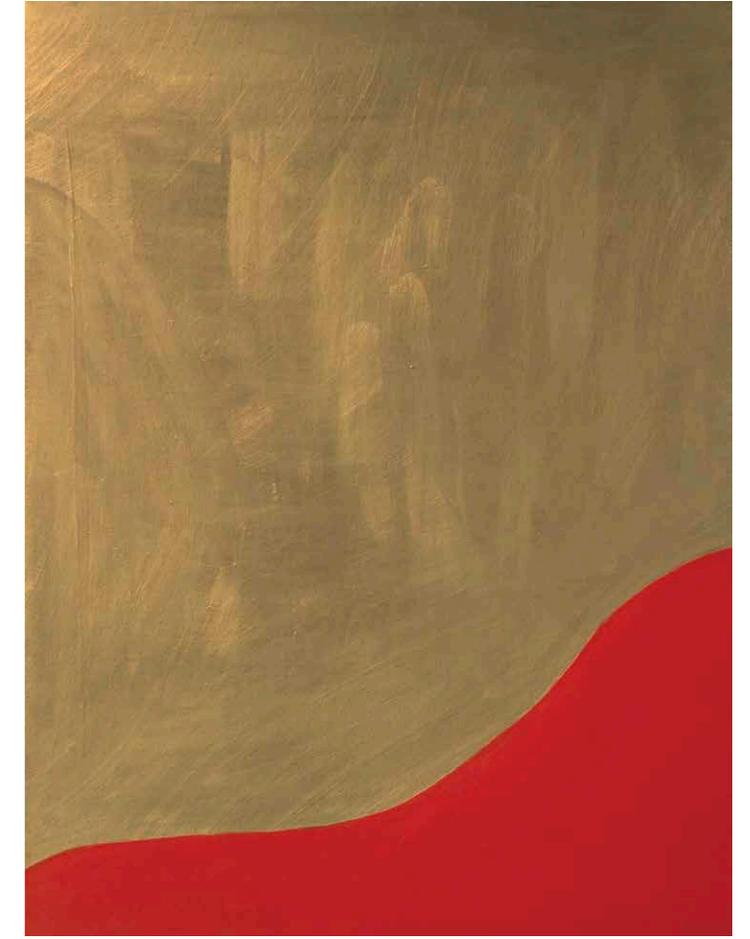
Every intricate step taken with this group was towards the shared goal of an all-embracing creative representation, both technically and emotionally. The decisions we made, actions we took, and words we uttered every day were an active commitment to working in sync and to telling this story right. I needed to understand these swimmers on a deeper level, in order to bring more humanity to their stories and experiences, so I travelled to their competitions,

watched them during practice, interviewed them during breaks, and joined their team barbecues. I even had the honour of getting into the water with them. All of this has culminated in a new body of work, including paintings, video installations, and a short documentary capturing their synchronised bodies and voices. Beyond the swimming pool, the sheer scope of their individual stories is breathtakingly vast, spanning generations, communities, and life experiences. And as we spent more time together, I was able to reach deeper into their lives as black senior citizens, who find familiarity and comfort in a landscape that they have historically been excluded from.

Moreover, they were also their own 'lifeguards', speaking freely with one another and me if they felt certain pieces didn't capture the totality of their experience and essence. I recall a moment when I invited a few team members to my studio, to view the earlier, more abstract works of the young synchronised swimmers, many of whom lack facial features and rely on their large braided buns to be identified and numbered. Interestingly, The Harlem Honeys and Bears were not particularly fond of these (in their words) 'arbitrary' images, and expressed their own desire to be depicted with more realism. I incorporated their feedback in my work, utilising a more true-to-life technique, neatly paralleling the thorough manner in which I got to know and work with these swimmers. The last, eponymous work, completed for this exhibition, features an older, blind swimming student, reaching casually for her goggles, as she comfortably traverses an expressively jubilant pool-scape. The realistic nature of her form against the abstract manifestation of a deep end, represents how learning leads to confidence and trust leads to faith. Dreaming can be seeing, within the water and within oneself.

Additionally, the S-curve shape of the pool references the mathematical 'learning curve' in which slow and steady knowledge retention leads to a burst of productivity, and in this case, positivity.

The process of creating these works has been an eye-opening reinvestigation of my own artistic journey. I finally have my head above the water; but I am learning how the self-preservation of my work is acutely tied to the synchronised efforts of many, swimming mightily to the same song. I've learned to depend on and embrace the presence of a strong artist community, generous sponsors, supportive residence programmes, and dedicated art institutions, in order to more serenely navigate these artistic waters. With a team by my side, threats to the success of this delicate dance – dwindling time, misdirected energy, and selfish intentions – start to fade away... In a spirit of togetherness, the paintings now reflect the process.



"Swimming is the best thing that could happen to me. When I'm in that water it's just like – actually it's a therapy really. And what they normally give you in the hospital, I get here in the pool... To me age is just a number. And I'm gonna keep moving no matter what, and I just decided I'm gonna be young forever. It keeps me young, it keeps me young!"

Miss Lettice

"I decided to focus on representing the Black man as a winner, as in the case of *Medallion Man*. The body of work is ultimately about swimming, about the community, their resilience and triumphs."
Modupeola Fadugba



Biographies

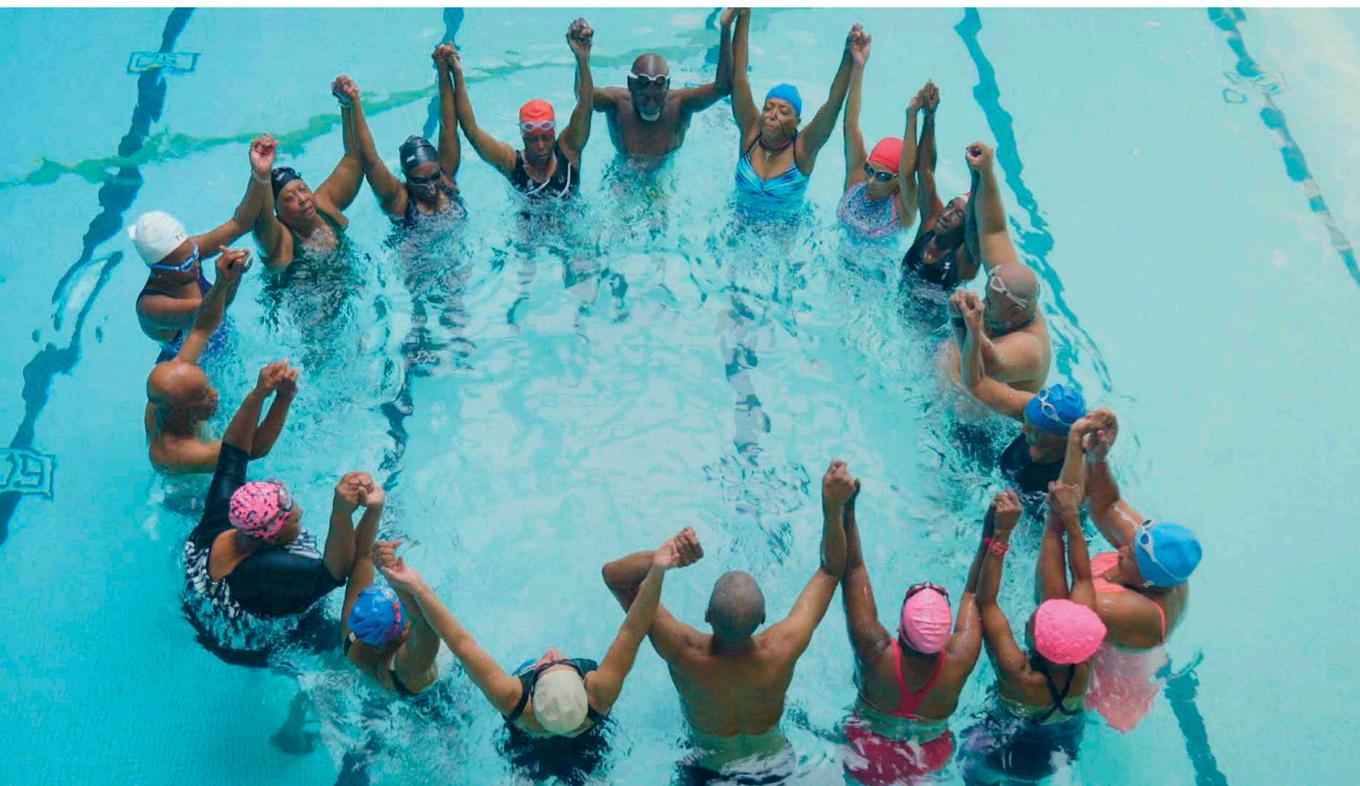
Modupeola Fadugba (b. 1985 in Lomé, Togo, lives and works in Abuja, Nigeria) is a multi-media artist, whose practice encompasses painting, drawing, and socially-engaged installation, addressing ideas of identity, social justice, and game theory. Fadugba has a background in economics, engineering and education and holds a BEng in Chemical Engineering and an MA in Economics from the University of Delaware, and an MEd from Harvard University. *The People's Algorithm* was awarded El Anatsui's Outstanding Production Prize, in 2014, and a Dakar Biennale Grand Prize in 2016. Recent solo exhibitions include *Heads Up, Keep Swimming*, Lagos (2017) and *Prayers, Players & Swimmers*, Cité des Arts, Paris (2017). Selected group exhibitions include: *The Royal Academy Summer Exhibition*, London (2017); *Afriques Capitales*, Lille (2017); and *Dak'Art*, Dakar (2016).

Katherine Finerty (b. New York City, lives and works in London, UK) is an independent art curator and writer, focusing on socially engaged practices, translocal identity politics, and contemporary African art. Finerty holds an MA in Curating from the Royal College of Art, studied History of Art at the University of Cambridge, and received her BA in Art History and Africana Studies from Cornell University. She was the curatorial assistant for the Göteborg International Biennale for Contemporary Art, 2015 and Rencontres Picha: Biennale de Lubumbashi 2013, and has interned in the curatorial departments of The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Studio Museum in Harlem, New York.



List of Works

Front and back covers	Details from <i>Deep Blue See</i> 51 x 72 in Acrylic, gold leaf, pencil and ink on burnt paper	p24-25	Sketchbook pages, mixed media
p4	<i>Black Vanilla</i> 48 x 48 in Acrylic, pencil and ink on burnt paper	p29	<i>Appointed Lifeguard</i> 51 x 60 in Acrylic, pencil, gold leaf and ink on burnt paper
p8-9	<i>Some Harlem Honeys</i> 51 x 72 in (triptych) Acrylic, pencil and ink on burnt paper	p30-31	<i>Pink Honey</i> 51 x 72 in Acrylic, pencil and ink on burnt paper
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p18-19, p48 & inside front and back covers	Stills from: <i>Dreams from the Deep End</i> Documentary video 15:40 mins	p38-39 & p46	Studio views
p20-23	<i>Dreams from the Deep End</i> : Modupeola Fadugba Installation views, Gallery 1957, 2018; photos: Nii Odzemna	p42-43	<i>Dreams from the Deep End</i> 48 x 144 in (triptych) Acrylic and gold leaf on canvas
		p44	<i>Medalion Man</i> 63 x 51 in Acrylic, pencil and ink on burnt paper



This publication accompanies *Dreams from the Deep End*, an exhibition by Modupeola Fadugba, curated by Katherine Finerty. The exhibition took place at Gallery 1957, Accra, 25 August – 31 October 2018.

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Gallery 1957