



11-22 44th Rd  
Long Island City, NY  
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## ***Abstraction in the Black Diaspora***

**Tariku Shiferaw, Adebunmi Gbadebo, Alteronce Gumby, & Ashanté Kindle**

October 24 - December 13, 2020

Conceived by Tariku Shiferaw alongside co-curator Ayanna Dozier, FALSE FLAG is pleased to present *Abstraction in the Black Diaspora*, featuring work by Adebunmi Gbadebo, Alteronce Gumby, Ashanté Kindle, and Shiferaw.

Each artist engages Blackness through a distinct approach grounded in abstraction. The exhibition understands Blackness in relation to its diasporic activity of cultural production: what scholar Katherine McKittrick describes as the “rebellious inventions” of cultural customs that emerged within a colonized system of racial and sexual violence against Black life, and the gross exploitation of Black labor.

*Abstraction in the Black Diaspora* will mark the debut of several new pieces, including Shiferaw’s *Africa Paintings*, which feature flags of nations across the Black diaspora masked by white paint and abstract marks. Spanning a range of media – from painting, print-making, sculptural relief to collage – the selected works demonstrate the potential of abstraction to reinterpret reality and suggest mythological beginnings – possibilities foreclosed by direct representation. The exhibition advocates for abstraction as a unique means for Black artists to reimagine Black life within the context of structural anti-Blackness.

A newly-published text by Ayanna Dozier, *Rebellious Inventions: Abstraction in the Black Diaspora*, accompanies the exhibition. The essay centers artistic praxis to emphasize technique and embodiment as equally important aspects of art-making. This focus on praxis frames Black abstraction as an aesthetics of doing, rather than an aesthetics of representational meaning, restoring affirmative ontological, creative thought and action to abstraction’s relationship with Blackness in an era defined by anti-Black racism.

The exhibition is on view from October 24 through December 13, 2020. An extended opening reception will be held on October 24th - from 2pm to 7pm - to allow for staggered entries throughout the day to accommodate safety and social distancing measures. A series of remote discussions with the artists and curators will be scheduled throughout the exhibition’s run – dates forthcoming.



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**Tariku Shiferaw** is a New York-based artist who explores mark-making in order to address the physical and metaphysical spaces of painting and social structures. Recent exhibitions include *Men of Change*, a three-year nationally traveling exhibition with the Smithsonian Institution (2019-2022), and *Unbound*, at the Zuckerman Museum of Art (2020). Other group shows include the *2017 Whitney Biennial*, as part of Occupy Museums; *A Poet\*hical Wager*, at the Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland (2017); and *What's Love Got to Do With It?*, at The Drawing Center (2019). Solo exhibitions include *Erase Me*, Addis Fine Art, London (2017) and *This Ain't Safe*, Cathouse Proper, Brooklyn (2018). Shiferaw participated in the Whitney Museum of American Art Independent Study Program (2018-2019) and Open Sessions at The Drawing Center (2018-2020). He is currently an artist-in-residence at the World Trade Center through Silver Art Projects (2020-2021).

**Ayanna Dozier** is a Brooklyn-based scholar, curator, filmmaker and performance artist. Her latest experimental short film *Softer* (2020) was included in the official selection for Open City Documentary Festival (2020) and the Aesthetica Short Film Festival (2020). She is currently working on an expanded cinema piece on testimony and reproductive justice entitled *Content Warning* (2020). Her doctoral dissertation, *Mnemonic Aberrations*, traces the history of Black feminist experimental short film in the United States and the United Kingdom from 1968 to the present. Dozier has exhibited at Westbeth Gallery, Evening Hours, and Anthology Film Archives and was a Helena Rubinstein Fellow in Critical Studies at the Whitney Independent Studies Program (2018-2019). She is the author of *Janet Jackson's The Velvet Rope* for Bloomsbury Academic Press and is currently a lecturer at the Whitney Museum of American Art and Fordham University in the Department of Communication and Media Studies.

**Adebunmi Gbadebo** creates sculptures, paintings, prints, and paper using human hair sourced from people of the African diaspora. Rejecting traditional art materials, Gbadebo sees hair as a means to center her people and their histories as central to the narratives in her work. Gbadebo has exhibited at the Dhaka Art Summit (Bangladesh), 1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair (London), the Minneapolis Institute of Art (Minneapolis), Miranda Kuo Gallery (New York), The Jacob K. Javits Convention Center (New York), and the Morris Art Dodge Foundation at College of Saint Elizabeth (New Jersey). Her work is in the permanent collections of the Minneapolis Institute of Art and the Minnesota Museum of American Art, and has been featured in *The New York Times*, *The Huffington Post*, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *Artspace*, *Ocula*, and *Afropunk*. Gbadebo is currently represented by Claire Oliver Gallery, Harlem, NY.



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**Alteronce Gumby** graduated from Yale University's MFA program in 2016 after earning a BFA from Hunter College. He has exhibited internationally at the Camden Arts Centre (London), Gladstone Gallery (New York), the American University Museum at the Katzen Arts Center (Washington, DC), Parrasch Heijnen (Los Angeles), Independent Brussels (Brussels), among others. Gumby has won notable awards such as the Austrian American Foundation/Seebacher Prize for Fine Arts and the Robert Reed Memorial Scholarship. He has curated exhibitions such as *A Muffled Sound Underwater* at Latchkey Gallery and *To Dream Avante-Garde* at Hammond Harkins Galleries. Gumby has participated in numerous international artist residencies such as the Rauschenberg Residency (2019), London Summer Intensive (2016), Summer Academy in Salzburg, Austria (2015), and as the 2016 recipient of the Harriet Hale Woolley Scholarship at the Fondation des États-Unis in Paris. His work has been featured in *New American Paintings*, *Cultured*, and *BOMB*. In addition to his recent solo exhibition at Parrasch Heijnen, he will present a two-part solo exhibition in New York City with Charles Moffett Gallery and FALSE FLAG slated for March 2021, and will publish his first monograph in February 2021.

**Ashanté Kindle** is an MFA candidate at The University of Connecticut, and received her BFA from Austin Peay State University in Clarksville, TN. Kindle characterizes her practice as a form of personal healing: creation driven by a desire to celebrate the history and beauty of Blackness. Through repetitive mark-making, Kindle creates abstracted wave forms that resemble the natural textures that occur in Black hair through a range of styling techniques - such as s-curves, finger waves and consistent brushing.



Adebunmi Gbadebo, *True Blue: Patience*  
(Detail from *True Blue: 18 Hole*), 2019  
Human Black Hair, Cotton, Rice Paper,  
Denim, Indigo, Hair Dye, Silk Screen Print  
22 x 28 x 2 in | 55.9 x 71.1 x 5.1 cm  
Image courtesy of the artist